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The Material Spirit: Cosmology and Ethics in Paul

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This essay argues that the traditional dichotomy between ‘apocalypticism’ and philosophy should be transcended with regard to Paul’s understanding of the *pneuma* in relation to *sarx*. The essay first analyses the cosmology of the *pneuma* in connection with the future resurrection of believers (1 Cor 15.35–50), then considers its presence in the bodies of believers here and now (2 Corinthians 3–5), then interprets the ‘anthropology’ of 1 Thess 5.23 and 1 Cor 2.14–15 and 15.44 and its connection with Paul’s ‘ethics’, and finally proposes a reading of Rom 8.1–13 in relation to 7.7–25 that is based on Paul’s concrete cosmology.

Keywords: Paul, *pneuma*, apocalypticism, philosophy, Stoicism, Romans 8.10

Introduction: Dichotomies

La vérité est toujours concrète. This article argues that this famous claim is also true of Paul at a crucial point in his thought: his understanding of *pneuma* (‘spirit’) in its relation to the body and *sarx* (‘flesh’). I will argue that Paul thought of *pneuma* and *sarx* in wholly concrete, cosmological terms. Thus, in addition to everything else that should be said of it, *pneuma* is a material entity that is made up of the cosmological elements to be found above in heaven, which in the ancient world were thought to be fire and air. And in addition to everything else that should be said of it, *sarx* refers to physical bodies down here on earth, which in the ancient view were made up of the two remaining elements, water and earth—but also, to some extent, of fire and air. My theme, of course, is also the wider significance of these claims.

The importance of the *pneuma* in Paul’s thought can hardly be overstated. In fact, once one has become attuned to it, one will find the *pneuma* everywhere in Paul, even where it is not actually mentioned. That is a problem in itself. A far greater problem is that one will need to decide upon the framework within which to understand Paul’s talk of the *pneuma*. That is the problem of finding the best categories of interpretation. A look at the rich scholarship on the topic

shows that it has been very extensively focused on deciding in what cultural contexts one should situate Paul's ideas. That is perfectly legitimate and indeed quite necessary. Unfortunately, the scholarly discussions have also been hampered by almost always operating with sharply drawn dichotomies: Paul's thought about the *pneuma* belongs *here—and not there*. These dichotomies are well known: a Jewish, perhaps even an 'Old Testament' view against a Greek one; a Palestinian Jewish view (as, e.g., in Qumran) against a Hellenistic Jewish one (as, e.g., in Alexandria: Philo, the Wisdom of Solomon and the like); an 'apocalyptic' view against a 'philosophical' one; an understanding of the *pneuma* as a 'power' against a 'substantive' or an 'idealistic' or an 'individualistic' or an 'existentialist' one; an immaterial understanding of the *pneuma* against a material one; or finally—at the bottom line—a 'theological' understanding against a 'naturalistic' one. There is no end to these dichotomies. Of course, we need categories to make any sense of what we read, but we must beware of simplifying dichotomies. The better we are able to allow for interplay between those categories we necessarily erect, the better we will be able to see what is actually going on in our texts. And of course, the texts are far more interesting than those dichotomies.¹

Predecessors: Gunkel, Horn, Martin

It is natural to begin an ultra-brief Forschungsbericht with the small masterpiece by Hermann Gunkel that was published 120 years ago: *Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes nach der populären Anschauung der apostolischen Zeit und der Lehre des Apostels Paulus*.² Though Gunkel's analyses are in many respects sound, they were also articulated through dichotomies: (i) Paul drew on the 'popular view' of the *pneuma* in the early church—and *not* on the 'Old Testament' or 'Hellenistic Judaism'.³ But why the opposition? (ii) In Paul the *pneuma* is a divine power that is 'supernatural' and 'transworldly'—and *so not* 'natural'.⁴ But where does this contrast come from? Other views of Gunkel's

1 Do I also wish to go beyond the dichotomy between a metaphorical and a literal reading in relation to Paul's many forms of expression concerning the *pneuma* (as Margaret Mitchell has very pertinently asked about my position)? No. On the contrary, the brunt of my argument is that in spite of everything that can be (rightly) said about the ineliminability of metaphorical language in human talk and thought, there is and remains a clear distinction, which should precisely be enforced in relation to Paul's talk of the *pneuma*.

2 Hermann Gunkel, *Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes nach der populären Anschauung der apostolischen Zeit und der Lehre des Apostels Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1888).

3 See Gunkel, *Die Wirkungen*, 76–9 ('Old Testament') and 79–82 ('Hellenistic Judaism').

4 Thus Gunkel, *Die Wirkungen*: 'supernaturalistisch' (75), 'Supernaturalismus' (101), 'übernatürlich' (73, 75, 99). Gunkel does realize that 'auch für die urapostolische Anschauung die Grenze des Uebernatürlichen und Natürlichen der Natur der Sache nach nicht immer scharf gezogen werden konnte' (84). Seen from our perspective, this observation should have led him to query the distinction itself.

were more straightforward and, as I will argue, basically correct: (iii) The *pneuma* in Paul is a material phenomenon.⁵ (iv) The *pneuma* directs the whole life of believers.⁶

From Gunkel I will make a giant leap forward to two books from the 1990s that directly set the stage for the present inquiry.

In 1992 Friedrich Wilhelm Horn published his magisterial book on Paul's pneumatology, *Das Angeld des Geistes*.⁷ Here, among many other things, Horn helpfully distinguishes between six uses of *pneuma* in Paul:⁸ a functional one (where the *pneuma* is active in making believers act or speak the way they do),⁹ a substantive one (when the *pneuma* is said to 'live in' believers),¹⁰ a material one (as applied in sacramental contexts),¹¹ a 'hypostasis' use (of the *pneuma* as distinct from God and believers),¹² a normative one (where the *pneuma* has ethical implications)¹³ and an anthropological one (where Paul speaks of 'my' or 'your' *pneuma*).¹⁴ What I miss, though, is an attempt to hold those various uses together in a single grip.¹⁵ For instance, is the *pneuma* active, that is, does it function in believers, *by* being present as a substance in them? Does it function, and is it substantively present, in them *as* a material entity? If so, is it perhaps in *all* cases an 'anthropological' entity? And is it in this form that it has a normative function, too? Finally, if the answer to all the other questions is affirmative, how is the *pneuma* in this form related to the *pneuma* as 'hypostasized' and a

5 See Gunkel, *Die Wirkungen*, 43–9, for the early church ('ein übersinnlicher Stoff', 44; 'stofflich oder an ein stoffliches Substrat gebunden', 47) and 99–101 for Paul (the *pneuma* is 'mit einem himmlischen Stoff verwandt', 101; cf. 99, where Gunkel also uses the term 'verwandt'). Note, however, that while he recognizes this aspect of Paul's understanding of the *pneuma*, Gunkel criticizes Holsten, Lüdemann and Pfeleiderer for having made 'die Stofflichkeit des Geistes zum Ausgangspunkt der Schilderung...der paulinischen Lehre vom πνεῦμα' (101).

6 Gunkel, *Die Wirkungen*, 75: '[D]as ganze Leben des Christen ist eine Wirkung des πνεῦμα, das bedeutet: das ganze Leben des Christen offenbart eine gewaltige, überweltliche, göttliche Kraft'. According to Gunkel, this idea was Paul's own invention.

7 Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, *Das Angeld des Geistes* (FRLANT 154; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992).

8 Horn, *Das Angeld*, 60.

9 E.g. 1 Thess 1.5–6; Gal 5.22; 1 Cor 12.11; 14.2.

10 E.g. 1 Thess 4.8; 1 Cor 3.16; 6.19; Rom 8.9, 11.

11 E.g. 1 Cor 10.4; 12.13; 2 Cor 1.21–22; 3.8; Rom 5.5.

12 E.g. 1 Cor 2.10; Rom 5.5; 8.26–27.

13 E.g. Gal 5.25; 6.1; 1 Cor 4.21; Rom 8.4; 15.30.

14 E.g. 1 Cor 6.20 v.l.; 16.18; Rom 1.9.

15 As against this, Horn explicitly finds—and argues all through the book—that only a developmental perspective can explain the different aspects of the *pneuma* addressed in the letters: 'Solange...dieses Werden [sc. "der pl Briefe"] und die situative Bedingtheit der pl Aussagen missachtet werden, muss der Exeget bei der Feststellung *eines Nebeneinanders unterschiedlicher Aussagen stehenbleiben*' (Horn, *Das Angeld*, 429 [my italics]).

messenger between God and men? Some of these questions, at least, will be addressed in what follows.¹⁶

The other book I have in mind is Dale B. Martin's wonderfully refreshing book from 1995 on *The Corinthian Body*.¹⁷ As the title indicates, this book is not directly about the *pneuma*, but more broadly about Paul's highly variegated talk of body in 1 Corinthians. But the *pneuma* comes in, too, since Martin argues (not unlike Gunkel and to a large extent drawing, like Gunkel, on the 'populäre Anschauung' of Paul's own day) that the *pneuma* should be understood as some form of material 'stuff'.¹⁸ With Martin, however, we come across a set of dichotomies that both have a long history and are also very much with us at present. One is between what we might call ordinary folks, to whom Paul belonged, and the elite, not least philosophers.¹⁹ Behind this lies an even more fundamental one, between 'apocalypticism' and philosophy. On Paul's non-elitist construction of the body in 1 Corinthians, according to Martin, the body is a porous entity that is exposed to the surrounding powers. What matters, therefore, is that you are connected to the *right* power, God. This is part of Paul's 'apocalypticism', which Martin construes as being in direct opposition to philosophy.²⁰

It is curious to note the extent to which Martin's overall picture of Paul resembles an older one that continues to have a strong grip on scholars, that of Ernst Käsemann with its emphasis on Paul's 'apocalypticism' and his famous

16 Unfortunately, there is no room to discuss here the last question concerning the relationship between the *pneuma* as entering into human beings and as a messenger between God and men. For some speculation in this regard, see n. 57 towards the end.

17 Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven/London: Yale University, 1995).

18 Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 128. There is the vital difference from Gunkel, however, that where the latter referred almost exclusively to the 'populäre Anschauung' of the early church, Martin does a splendid job of surveying the generally accepted views in the Graeco-Roman world far more broadly. In spite of this, there is a bit of dichotomic reading in Martin's argument since he claims that the ancient world did not really have the notion of the 'immaterial' at all, which only came in with Descartes (2–6). That claim is manifestly false. Platonism certainly operated with the notion of the 'immaterial'. Indeed, it is quite probably correct to say that the intuitive, modern understanding of Paul's talk of *pneuma* as referring to something 'immaterial' or 'spiritual', an understanding that very much remains with us and against which Martin was rightly reacting, is the result of the invasion of Platonism into early Christian thinking. Note, however, that this only happened *after* Paul and the first century CE, probably via a route that goes from Philo to Clement of Alexandria and into mainstream Christianity.

19 To call this a dichotomy to be overcome will not appeal to people with Marxist leanings. I am not myself a Marxist even though I recognize the risks of ideological thinking. And I do believe that there was a closer connection than a Marxist (or even a Nietzschean) would acknowledge between the views of ancient philosophers and those of the non-elite (so-called 'popular morality'). If so, there is a dichotomy to be overcome here, too.

20 On the body: Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 17–18. On powers and 'apocalypticism': e.g. 129–35.

talk of opposed spheres of power.²¹ What we see here—in spite of all remaining differences²²—is a similarity that has its roots in what is perhaps *the* fundamental dichotomy in the Western consciousness: that between religion and philosophy. We should try hard to overcome this dichotomy, at least if we are talking about the ancient world. If we do that, we shall find that while Paul was certainly an ‘apocalypticist’, he was *also* in contact with the philosophy of his day.

This means two things. First, Paul *fills in* his fundamental, ‘apocalyptic’ view of the world by drawing on contemporary philosophical ideas about the structure of the world. That is, he thinks in wholly concrete terms ‘cosmologically’ and even ‘naturalistically’, not just ‘cosmically’ in an unspecified (and ‘theological’), ‘apocalyptic’ sense.²³ Second, Paul argues for his various claims in ways that qualify as being ‘philosophical’ in the following two senses: he attempts to combine the various central concepts with which he works into *something like* a coherent system;²⁴ and he attempts, in particular, to integrate his talk about God, Christ, the *pneuma* and much more into an account of the world that makes sense of it (if nothing more) to believers and non-believers alike.

By understanding Paul’s thought in this way, we have left behind anything like a ‘Judaism/Hellenism divide’. That is one more obsolete dichotomy that we need to transcend.²⁵

21 Compare Käsemann’s famous claim that ‘[d]ie Apokalyptik...die Mutter aller christlichen Theologie gewesen [ist]’ in ‘Die Anfänge christlicher Theologie’ (1960), repr. in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen*, vol. 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 3rd ed. 1970) 82–104, esp. 100. Also ‘Zur paulinischen Anthropologie’ in *Paulinische Perspektiven* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2nd ed. 1972 [1st ed. 1969]) 9–60, esp. 48, with a thrice-repeated ‘Apokalyptisch ist...’ On spheres of power, see the same article on ‘Herrschaftswechsel’, ‘Mächte der Dämonie’ and more (55).

22 These differences are huge inasmuch as Martin’s approach is fundamentally anthropological, whereas that of Käsemann is, of course, strongly theological.

23 I confess that I am quite sceptical about the use of ‘kosmisch’ or ‘cosmic’ in the Käsemann-Nachfolge. ‘Kosmologisch’ and ‘cosmological’ should be taken to mean just that, and the former pair should be avoided until somebody manages to give it a precise sense. This linguistic and conceptual point slurs an otherwise fine survey by Martinus de Boer of ‘Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology’, *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 1 (ed. J. J. Collins; New York/London: Continuum) 345–83. It does not, however, in itself undercut de Boer’s distinction between two distinct patterns of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, one being ‘cosmological’ and the other ‘forensic’ (see de Boer, ‘Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology’, 357–61).

24 The battle over whether Paul was a ‘systematic thinker’ or not was wholly appropriate in its own time and place (the 1980s and 1990s). By now, while we should remember the frontiers of that battle, we should also allow ourselves to look for coherence. It is not an either/or. Perspectives of ‘development’ or ‘situational’ explanations remain valid. But they do not render invalid the attempt to discover some degree of systematic coherence.

25 This was the great idea that lay behind the Library of Early Christianity (eight splendid volumes published in 1986–7 by the Westminster Press, Philadelphia). In the words of its general editor, Wayne Meeks, ‘[t]his series of books is an exercise in taking down fences’ (see ‘Foreword’ to Robert M. Grant, *Gods and the One God* [Library of Early Christianity 1;

Summary and Procedure

To summarize so far: Paul was an 'apocalypticist', but he also worked philosophically. In trying to understand his view of the *pneuma* and the body, we must allow ourselves to analyse what he says in the light of the broadest possible understanding of his context and without letting ourselves be guided by any of all those modern dichotomies that bedevil our view. Only then, I contend, will we be able to grasp what he says in all its strangeness and power.

The procedure will be as follows. Paul speaks of the *pneuma* both in the present and in connection with Christ's future return and the resurrection of believers. It is best to begin from his account of these future events, where we find the clearest elaboration of the *pneuma*. Then we shall go back to the *pneuma* as present in believers' bodies here and now and consider this 'anthropologically' and 'ethically'.²⁶ Finally, we shall discuss a single passage, Rom 8.1–13. For of course, the basic point of clarifying Paul's concept of *pneuma* is to help us understand better the individual text. Even more: the ultimate *argument* for the adequacy of some overall grasp lies in the extent to which we feel that it helps to elucidate the individual texts. In addition, Rom 8.1–13 belongs to what is probably Paul's last letter. It is permissible, therefore, to draw on all the previous letters for the analysis of this text.²⁷

The Role of the *Pneuma* at the Resurrection

The basic point about the future is succinctly stated in Rom 8.11 when Paul says that God, 'who has raised Christ from the dead will also make alive your

Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986] 13–14, esp. 13). 'The history of Christianity's beginnings is *part* of the history of Judaism in antiquity, and both are part of the history of Greco-Roman culture' (see Meeks, 'Foreword' to Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* [Library of Early Christianity 7; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987] 9–10, esp. 9 [Meeks's italics]).

²⁶ The scare quotes around 'anthropological', 'ethical', 'apocalyptic' etc. are intended to remind us all the time that these are modern constructs (with more or less clear bases back in history) that have no explicit foothold in Paul himself. While we can certainly use these terms, we must with all accessible means try to avoid absolutizing them as if there were, for instance, an independent field of discourse in Paul that one might identify as constituting his anthropology (etc.).

²⁷ Once more on 'systematic' versus 'developmental': I am not denying the developmental view. Nor do I reject the view that one should always primarily consider any given topic or concept in Paul within the individual letter to which it belongs. On the contrary, I applaud these views. Still, one must *also* be allowed to try to think somewhat more systematically, as it were trying to adopt a bird's-eye view on all the (genuine) letters taken as a whole.

mortal bodies by means of his *pneuma* that lives within you'.²⁸ The *pneuma* is the power that was operative in raising Christ from the dead, that lives within believers in the present and that will also at the eschaton make their mortal bodies come alive. How will the latter thing happen?

That is the question Paul intends to answer in 1 Cor 15.35–50. I only need to make a few observations here on this crucial text.²⁹

Paul's question is, of course, with what body (σῶμα) the dead will arise (15.35). And his argued reply is that it is a body (a σῶμα) that is 'pneumatic' (15.44). It follows that this body must qualify as a genuine body. Otherwise, there is no point at all to Paul's argument. He also explicitly states that the resurrection body is not one of 'flesh and blood' (15.50), but '*this* mortal or corruptible (something or body)' (15.53–54) as *changed* (15.51–52). Here he appears to reflect a distinction already drawn by Aristotle between so-called substantive change, where an individual changes from being dead or alive to its opposite (coming-to-be and passing-away), and so-called accidental change, where the individual remains the individual that it is, but changes in its quality, quantity (like size) or whatever.³⁰ So far, then, the picture is clear enough. But how will the body be changed? And what is a 'pneumatic body'?

This is what Paul explains in the remainder of the passage (15.36–49). The net result is that the resurrection body, which is generated by Christ as life-generating *pneuma* (15.45) and which is itself a pneumatic body, is also *eo ipso* a heavenly one. Christ is now in heaven and will return from heaven (cf. Phil 3.20). As life-generating, heavenly *pneuma*, he will change or transform the earthly, 'psychic' and mortal body of flesh and blood into a body that is heavenly, 'pneumatic' and immortal.³¹

28 Where nothing is noted, translations are my own, based on Nestle-Aland 27th ed.

29 I have set out parts of the argument more substantially in 'A Stoic Understanding of *Pneuma* in Paul', *Philosophy at the Roots of Christianity* (ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen and Henrik Tronier; Working Papers 2; Copenhagen: The Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, 2006) 101–23.

30 For substantive change in Aristotle, see *De Generatione et Corruptione* I.4, 319b10–18: 'there is "alteration" when the *substratum* is perceptible and persists, but changes in its own properties... The body, e.g., although persisting as the same body, is now healthy and now ill; ... But when nothing perceptible persists in its identity as a *substratum*, and *the thing changes as a whole* (when e.g. the seed as a whole is converted into blood, or water into air, or air as a whole into water), such an occurrence is no longer "alteration". It is a *coming-to-be* [γένεσις] of one substance and a passing-away [φθορά] of the other...' (trans. H. H. Joachim in W. D. Ross, *The Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2 [Oxford: Clarendon, 1930]; the italics are, of course, neither Aristotle's nor Joachim's, but mine).

31 The same picture lies behind Phil 3.21, 2 Cor 5.1–10 (I contend) and Rom 8.11. Still, do I not let very much hang on 1 Corinthians 15 (as John Barclay has queried)? Both yes and no. Yes, in the sense that this text provides the key that *shows* (as I take it) how Paul understood the *pneuma*. No, in the sense that the rest of the material analysed below provides additional support once one sees how it is opened up *by* that key.

Paul's argument makes straightforward and immediate sense on one supposition: that the *pneuma* is specifically tied to heaven and that it is a physical element (like heaven itself) that may enter into and transform an earthly, physical body of flesh and blood so that it will obtain the same form as a heavenly, physical body like the sun, the moon and the stars (15.41). Where in Paul's context does one find such an idea? Answer: in Stoicism and, I believe, nowhere else.³²

If this is correct, then we have a situation where Paul is both stating the basic 'apocalyptic' framework of his thought—and also spelling it out in some detail by relying on ideas (a basic, Stoic cosmological framework and a specific, Aristotelian idea) that are derived from contemporary philosophy. Apparently Paul himself did not see any opposition here, e.g. between 'apocalyptic' revelations and Stoic cosmology.³³ But in that case, why should we?

I am presupposing here that the reader has a rough sense of what one might call the Stoic pneumatology. The Stoic *pneuma* is a material element or energy made up from a mixture of the two finest elements of the four: fire and air. It extends throughout the world but has its principal place in the uppermost regions of the world. But the Stoic *pneuma* is also a cognitive entity. It is what gives human beings a share in rationality and reason (*logos* and *nous*). The Stoics therefore said (and I am quoting from Paul's contemporary, Seneca) that 'Reason is nothing other than a part of the divine spirit descended (or sunk) into a human body'.³⁴

There are many differences between Stoic cosmology and the cosmology presupposed by Paul's argument about the resurrection body.³⁵ What matters here is

32 For Stoicism, see, e.g., Michael Lapidge, 'Stoic Cosmology', *The Stoics* (ed. J. M. Rist; Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California, 1978) 161–85. See also, e.g., A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1987) 266–343. The best argument for the claim that the idea is specifically Stoic may be the fact that when Philo, who was fundamentally a Platonist, gets near to ideas about the connection between heavenly bodies and earthly ones mediated by the *pneuma*, he invariably turns Stoic. An example: *Leg.* 1.31–42 is Philo's famous exegesis of Gen 2.7, in which he basically employs Platonic categories in his analysis of the immaterial *nous*. At 1.42, however, he connects *nous* with *pneuma* and contrasts *pneuma* with the *pnœ* of Gen 2.7 by the following *technical* Stoic terms: τὸ μὲν γὰρ πνεῦμα νενόηται κατὰ τὴν ἰσχύον καὶ εὐτονίαν καὶ δύναμιν.

33 That this is, in fact, the case is suggested by the transition he makes from his apparently more philosophical and cosmological argument in 15.35–49 to the more picturesque, 'mythic' and 'apocalyptic' account in 15.51–52. He introduces the new section at 15.50 by a Τοῦτο δέ φημι in the sense of 'What I mean is this: ...' And he is quite unconcerned that the more philosophical points he makes in 15.50 and 15.53–54 surround a revelation by him of an 'apocalyptic' 'secret' concerning the change that believers will undergo.

34 *Ep.Mor.* 66.12: *Ratio...nihil aliud est quam in corpus humanum pars divini spiritus mersa.*

35 One difference is that in Stoicism soul and body are separated at death. Whereas the soul of the non-wise person stays on for a brief time, that of the wise person (compare believers in Paul) lives on in heaven in a manner like that of 'the other stars' (SVF 2.812) until the final conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις); cf. SVF 2.809 and 810–22. Compare on this A. A. Long, 'Soul

that it is this quite concrete *kind* of thinking that Paul is presupposing and that he introduces ideas from it quite smoothly into his overall 'apocalyptic' framework. There is no opposition in Paul between 'apocalypticism' and a quite concrete cosmology as articulated in philosophy.³⁶

The Role of the *Pneuma* in the Present: Bodily Transformation Here and Now?

Believers have received the *pneuma* when they were converted, either in connection with faith or in baptism.³⁷ But how is the *pneuma* present in believers?

Second Corinthians 3–5 suggest an answer. At 3.18 Paul famously says that 'seeing the glory of the Lord with uncovered heads, we are being transformed into that same image [that is, into the Lord] from glory into glory inasmuch as (it happens) by the Lord (who is) *pneuma*'. Here the *pneuma* seems to be operative in believers both materially (the transformation) and cognitively (the vision). Note also that already at 3.17 Paul has suggested that the Lord, that is, the risen Christ, *is* the *pneuma*, a point that he seems to presuppose in 3.18.³⁸ At 4.6 Paul then describes what is probably his own conversion vision. There is no mention of the *pneuma*, but 4.7–18 spells out how the conversion 'treasure' is present in Paul's physical body of flesh and blood, and here the *pneuma* gradually obtains an important role. I take it that in two crucial places in this text Paul in fact speaks of the presence and behaviour of the *pneuma* in his own mortal body.

and Body in Stoicism', *Phronesis* (1982) 34–57, esp. 27. (Also in Long, *Stoic Studies* [New York: Cambridge University, 1996].)

36 Question (as put to me by Cilliers Breytenbach): If Paul thought of the *pneuma* along Stoic cosmological lines in terms of two of the four cosmological elements, then why is he so disparaging in Gal 4.3 and 9 of precisely the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου? Answers: First, in Galatians he is comparing heathen *gods* with God, not speaking of the *pneuma*. Second, he has a predecessor for the same move in a text that nevertheless draws on the *pneuma* in its Stoic form: the Wisdom of Solomon. Here 1.6–7 clearly describes wisdom in terms derived from the Stoic account of the *pneuma*. At 13.1–9, however, an account of the (Stoic) gods in terms of the elements is rejected as being wholly inadequate as an account of (the author's own) *God*.

37 Cf., e.g., Gal 3.2–5, 14, 26–29 + 4.5–7 and Rom 8.14–17.

38 Is Paul not rather engaged, in 3.17, in a hermeneutical interpretation of the text from Scripture that he quotes in 3.16 (as Wayne Meeks and Peder Borgen have independently asked)? Surely, yes. But this should not exclude that he *also means* what he 'hermeneutically' finds in Scripture. Paul hardly did 'hermeneutics' in the modern way. He probably thought that Scripture described the world more or less directly. Thus he will have thought that the risen Christ *was pneuma* or at least a 'pneumatic' being, which does not necessarily imply that the two cannot also be notionally separated. Compare his easy change in Rom 8.9–10 from *pneuma Christou* to *Christos*.

The first is in 4.10–11, where he states that he constantly carries around in his own body the killing of Jesus and while still living is also constantly being given over to death because of Jesus ‘... in order that the life of Jesus, too, may be made visible (φανερωθῇ) in our body (σῶμα)’, that is, ‘in our mortal flesh (θνητῇ σάρξ)’. The visibility generated here is a present one,³⁹ corresponding to the present transformation from glory to glory of 3.18. And it is one for which the *pneuma* is responsible. The second indirect reference to the *pneuma* is in 4.16, where Paul famously distinguishes between his ‘outer human being’, that is, his physical body, which is gradually wasting away, and his ‘inner human being’ that is being renewed day by day. Here, too, I take the latter expression to refer to the bodily *pneuma* as present within Paul’s physical body or to Paul’s body as ‘pneumatized’.⁴⁰

The proposal is that Paul had the idea that the future transformation at the resurrection that would turn the mortal body of flesh and blood into an equally physical, but immortal body of *pneuma* was already solidly and quite concretely under way in the bodies of believers, who in connection with faith and baptism had received the *pneuma* from God. I confess that I had some qualms about this reading until I realized that it had, in fact, been proposed in a splendid article from 1996 by Samuel Vollenweider. Where I had toyed with using the term ‘atrophy’ for what happens to the ‘outer’ physical body—it atrophies, it dies away—Vollenweider had suggested speaking of ‘entropy’.⁴¹ The idea is the same, and it shows how concretely one must understand Paul.

If we are to find a proper term to categorize this picture of believers, we might of course speak of Paul’s ‘pneumatology’ (even though we have not spoken properly of the Holy Spirit itself). Or we might coin a new term and speak of his ‘soma-tology’ since this is all very much about his conception of the body of the believer. Most naturally, however, we would place our picture under Paul’s ‘anthropology’. Then there is another point: Paul’s anthropology cannot be separated from his

39 As already argued by Gunkel (*Die Wirkungen*, 87), but the point is contested.

40 This goes against the interpretation of Hans Dieter Betz in his presidential address, ‘The Concept of the “Inner Human Being” (ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος) in the Anthropology of Paul,’ *NTS* 46 (2000) 315–41: ‘the indwelling of the spirit is identical with the indwelling of Christ; ... this indwelling is not identical with the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος’ (333) and ‘the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος is not identical with the indwelling Christ. *Christ is not an earthly ἄνθρωπος, but the divine κύριος present in the heart through the πνεῦμα*’ (334, my italics). But does the italicized sentence not virtually imply that the ‘inner human being’ is the *pneuma*/Christ as present in the heart of the believer? However, a substantial discussion of Betz’ excellent analysis would require considerably more space.

41 Samuel Vollenweider, ‘Der Geist Gottes als Selbst der Glaubenden,’ *ZThK* 93 (1996) 163–92, esp. 187. (Also in Vollenweider, *Horizonte neutestamentlicher Christologie* [WUNT 144; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002].) Incidentally, on p. 186 Vollenweider connects the idea of a ‘pneumatic self’ with the ‘inner human being’ of 2 Cor 4.18.

cosmology.⁴² It reflects it and is part and parcel of it. Here is another dichotomy that should not make us miss what is actually there—the wholly concrete connection between ‘anthropology’ and cosmology. And here, too, Paul is in complete conformity with the philosophers of his day. In Stoicism, for instance, the anthropology is embedded in the cosmology.⁴³

The Role of the *Pneuma* in the Present: ‘Ethics’

As an entry into the theme of the *pneuma* in relation to ‘ethics’, we may note a few passages where Paul speaks most explicitly about what *we* would call ‘anthropology’.

First Thessalonians 5.23 is one such passage, with its distinction between the Thessalonians’ *pneuma*, soul (ψυχή) and body (σῶμα). Another similar set of passages is 1 Cor 2.14–15, with the famous distinction between ‘psychic man’ (ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος, 2.14) and ‘the pneumatic (man)’: ὁ πνευματικός, 2.15), and 1 Cor 15.44, with the distinction between the ‘psychic body’ and the ‘pneumatic body’.

The idea in all three cases is probably a very simple one. Believers have a body and a soul as does everybody else. Differently from everybody else, however, they also have the *pneuma*—in their ensouled bodies. That is, in their body and soul, which initially defined them as being merely ‘psychic men’, they have concretely received the *pneuma* and are therefore on their way, as we have seen, towards being completely transformed into bodies and souls that are ‘pneumatic’.⁴⁴ In this process, the *pneuma* both has a cognitive role to play and a material one, just as in Stoicism. Its role is cognitive in 1 Corinthians 2 (cf. 2.12) and material in 1 Corinthians 15. What is important right now is that Paul has placed the *pneuma* in these two roles at the beginning and end of the letter as a framework for his concrete advice in between, which, as we would say, is mainly ‘ethical’. Even more, his cosmological elaboration of the *pneuma* in 1 Corinthians 15 shows that his ‘ethical’ advice is also to be understood in the cosmological terms reflected in the anthropology we have just considered. Or to spell it out:

42 Compare also Ernst Käsemann, ‘Zur paulinischen Anthropologie’, *Paulinische Perspektiven* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2nd ed. [1st ed. 1969] 1972) 9–60, esp. 46, 52: ‘Anthropologie ist auch im Bereich des Glaubens Kosmologie in concreto’ (52). The difference between Käsemann and myself is that I understand ‘cosmology’ wholly concretely and do not oppose it to ‘philosophy’.

43 Allow me to repeat an earlier point: there is no ‘anthropology’ in Paul.

44 Let me emphasize the simplicity of this understanding. On the one side there is a being with a body and a soul—as any Greek philosopher would say. On the other side there is the same kind of being who has now also received the *pneuma* and whose body and soul have already been transformed and are also continually undergoing a transformation. Thus there are basically only two types of being here, not three.

sarx in Paul, which is, of course, the great, ‘ethical’ enemy, stands for the ensouled physical body that is—in quite concrete cosmological terms—an earthly one as opposed to a heavenly, pneumatic one.

We need, of course, to distinguish between two uses of *sarx*: a neutral use where it simply stands for the physical body of flesh and blood, and another use where it has distinctly negative connotations. For the former, see 1 Cor 15.39 and 15.50; for the latter, see 1 Cor 3.1–4, where the reference to ‘jealousy and quarrelling’ (ζήλος καὶ ἔρις) shows that we are already into ‘ethics’. But the point of distinguishing between the two uses is to bring out their inner *connection*: that it is *sarx* in the neutral sense that *explains* why *sarx* also has a negative side to it. Elsewhere, I have argued that embedded in Paul’s vice lists there is a real theory of desire, which he spells out most clearly in Romans 1, a theory that connects desire intrinsically with (i) the physical body and (ii) the self that necessarily goes with having an ensouled physical body.⁴⁵ The idea is that desire is a phenomenon that can only be found where there is the first-person perspective that in itself requires the presence of a physical body of flesh and blood which also is endowed with perception. If we are allowed to ascribe to Paul, too, this theory, which is spelled out in Stoicism, then we can see that Paul’s ‘ethics’ is grounded in his cosmology, namely, in his quite concrete understanding of the cosmological composition of the physical body of flesh and blood.⁴⁶

This also gives us the key to seeing the ‘ethical’ role of the *pneuma*. By concretely transforming the body of flesh and blood even in the present, the *pneuma* eradicates what constitutes the physical basis for sarkic, sinful desires and practices.⁴⁷ And so the Corinthians literally become God’s holy temple (3.16–17; 6.19), members of Christ (6.15), a single body energized by the single *pneuma*

45 See my *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh/Louisville: T. & T. Clark/Westminster John Knox, 2000) 152–55 and 209–12. I am not denying that something like the understanding of *bśr* to be found in the Qumran texts may well lie behind Paul’s talk of *sarx*, as has been argued by Jörg Frey, ‘Die paulinische Antithese von “Fleisch” und “Geist” und die palästinisch-jüdische Weisheits-tradition’, *ZNW* 90 (1999) 45–77, against Egon Brandenburger, *Fleisch und Geist* (WMANT 29; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1968). But Paul’s use of *sarx* and *pneuma* is not *identical* with the one in the Qumran texts. And as always, it seems to me that there is room for both Frey’s ‘palästinisch-jüdische’ tradition and Brandenburger’s ‘hellenistisch-jüdische’ tradition—and for the line offered here.

46 There is one corollary of this reading that I would like to spell out. In 1 Cor 2.14–15 Paul has distinguished between the ‘psychic man’ and the ‘pneumatic man’. When he then speaks in 3.1–4 of the Corinthians as being σάρκτινοι (3.1) and σαρκικοί (3.3), he is not introducing a third type of figure. On the contrary, the merely ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος is also, necessarily, σάρκτινος and σαρκικός. Compare for this the distinction in 1 Cor 15.44–46 between the ‘psychic body’ and the ‘pneumatic body’, which is then almost immediately followed by a statement on σῶξ καὶ αἶμα, which evidently refers back to the ‘psychic body’.

47 Cf. Gal 5.24 on the ‘pneumatics’: ...τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις.

(chap. 12) and so forth. Here the self has been transcended for the sake of what is shared, which is Christ or the *pneuma*. *And it is all to be understood quite literally*. The ‘anthropology’ grounds the ‘ethics’, but is itself an expression of the concrete cosmology.

‘Somatology’ in Romans 8.1–13

We are now ready to look at our main passage: Rom 8.1–13. We can only take up a few points in connection with this extremely rich passage.

The passage provides the solution to the problem described with graphic intensity in 7.7–25.⁴⁸ That problem is the one of *akrasia* (‘weakness of will’), to be understood as the best possible state of a pre-Christian Jew who wishes to follow God’s law. In a series of statements of ever-increasing horror, Paul describes how the ‘I’ realizes the presence of sinfulness in his limbs (7.23), which turns his body into a body of death (7.24). Once more, Paul is quite simply talking of the physical body of flesh and blood, which can never get rid of such sinfulness and which does die. But nobody would probably deny that in his account of the heightened self-reflection that leads to the exasperated cry in 7.24, Paul is philosophically *at work*. And nobody *should* deny that he is relying very strongly, whether directly or indirectly, on the intensive discussion of *akrasia* in Graeco-Roman philosophy.

The crucial question is, then, how what Paul says in 8.1–13 may constitute a solution to the problem as described in 7.7–25. How will ‘the law of the *pneuma* of life in Christ Jesus’ free the person described there from ‘the law of sin and death’ (8.2) in such a way that from now on there is no longer any condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (8.1)? The very simple answer is that this happens, and can only happen, when the earthly, physical body of desire, sin and death is filled up in its interior by the heavenly body of *pneuma* to such an extent that the physical body is actually (if not quite literally) *dead*, or atrophied, and has become merely an outer shell. Then the δικαίωμα of the law—a difficult term that probably refers both to the law’s concrete requirements and to its ultimate goal, which is life⁴⁹—will be

48 Compare the careful way in which Paul has laid out this duality in 7.5–6, where 7.5 prepares 7.7–25 and 7.6 prepares 8.1–13. The reading of 7.7–25 that I am presupposing here has been defended in ‘The Reception of Graeco-Roman Culture in the New Testament: The Case of Romans 7.7–25’, *The New Testament as Reception* (ed. M. Müller and H. Tronier; JSNTSup 230; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002) 32–57.

49 Ulrich Wilckens rightly emphasizes the first half of this (referring to Rom 1.32); see *Der Brief an die Römer* 2 (EKK VI/2; Zürich/Einsiedeln/Köln: Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1980) 128–9. Compare also the commentaries by James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas, TX: Word, 1988) and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993) ad loc. However, the use and context of δικαίωμα in Rom 5.16 taken together with 7.10 suggest that the term may also have the other meaning.

fulfilled, namely, in those who walk not in accordance with *sarx* but with *pneuma* (8.4). In 8.5–8 Paul in effect recapitulates the content of 7.14–25 in a description both of those—and these are actual *people*—who are either in accordance with *sarx* (8.5) or in it (8.8) and of *sarx* itself as a power or kind of ‘hypostasis’ of the sheer physicality of an ensouled physical body (8.6–7).⁵⁰ Note, however, that what Paul here says of *sarx* in highly mythological language is actually quite true phenomenologically as an account of the sheer physicality of an ensouled physical body when 8.6–7 is read as a summary of 7.14–25.

In 8.9–11, then, Paul provides his cosmologically based answer to the question of how the problem of 7.7–25 has been solved: his addressees are in the *pneuma*; God’s *pneuma* lives in them; they have Christ’s *pneuma*; Christ is in them. And in 8.10, on which I wish to concentrate, he *explains* how this single fact (given in so many forms) constitutes the solution. The answer is that the Romans’ body as qualified by sin,⁵¹ their sarkic body of flesh and blood in whose ‘limbs’ Paul previously saw sin at work (cf. 7.23), is now—dead. νεκρόν means ‘dead’, not ‘mortal’ (cf. 7.8).⁵² Of course, the Romans are not literally dead. Their bodies remain alive in some form or other. However, Paul is telling them that *if* Christ(’s *pneuma*) is in them, then these bodies are only a hollow shell—and in this sense actually dead—as compared with the *pneuma* inside the shell, which stands for life. I propose that we take this as literally and concretely as we can. Just as Paul had said of himself in 2 Cor 4.16 that his outer human being was being destroyed or withering away, so he is now transferring the same basic idea to the Romans. Their bodies are actually dead, atrophied, and what gives them life both now and in the future is the *pneuma* within them that they have received as part of having been made righteous.

However, this mixture of death (of the sarkic body) and life (of the *pneuma* within them) is, of course, a complicated matter. The Romans are *not* dead and

⁵⁰ Note how carefully Paul distinguishes between the people and *sarx* itself. He does not say that the people are ‘enemies of God’, which would not either fit his account in 7.7–25. By contrast, the φρόνημα of *sarx* itself is ἔχθρα εἰς θεόν (8.7).

⁵¹ This is my reading of διὰ ἁμαρτίαν.

⁵² The interpretations of 8.10 by commentators are myriad. For instance, Fitzmyer translates the first half concessively: ‘*though* the body be dead because of sin, the spirit has life because of uprightness’, and comments: ‘Without the Spirit, the source of Christian vitality, the human “body” is like a corpse because of the influence of sin...; *but* in union with Christ, the human “spirit” lives, for the Spirit resuscitates the dead human body through the gift of uprightness’ (*Romans* ad loc., my italics). Fitzmyer at least takes νεκρόν to mean ‘dead’. By contrast, Byrne in his otherwise excellent commentary translates ‘while the body may be mortal because of sin’ and explicitly obtains this meaning from θνητόν in 8.11 (B. Byrne, SJ, *Romans* [Sacra Pagina 6; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1996] ad loc., my italics). But νεκρόν does mean ‘dead’. Jewett concludes that ‘no completely satisfactory explanation of all the details [of 8.10] is currently available’ (see Robert Jewett, *Romans* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007] 492). Perhaps this is because scholars have balked at Paul’s wholly concrete and quite stark idea.

they have only received the *pneuma* as a down payment.⁵³ Paul therefore reassures them in 8.11 by stressing very emphatically that *if* God's *pneuma* actually 'lives in you', then God will also 'make your mortal bodies alive (ζωο-ποιήσῃ) by means of his *pneuma*, which (already) lives in you'. So, while the Romans' bodies are already dead (as *sarkic* bodies), they are also mortal (and here Paul does use the term θνητά) in the sense that in the future the Romans will either literally die (*completely*, we might say) or else be transformed *completely* by the *pneuma*.

The overall point of this reading is as follows. In 7.7–25 Paul has described the problem of weakness of the will vis-à-vis the Mosaic law in terms of a growing realization in the person described of the presence of 'sin in his limbs'. (i) Here sin may be understood as an 'apocalyptic' power that takes the person captive (cf. 7.23). Conversely, the *pneuma* of 8.1–11, which brings about the solution to the problem, may be understood as a power that vanquishes its adversary. (ii) However, one may also understand Paul's account of the problem as spelling out an actual feature of the bodies of human beings of flesh and blood, which is tied to their sheer physicality. Then Paul's account of the solution to the problem will also focus on actual features of the bodies of believers in terms of the cosmological elements of which they are made up. (iii) Yet another way of seeing the relation between problem and solution is to focus on the element of cognitive realization in the suffering person of the fix in which he finds himself. Then one will take Paul's account of the solution to rely on a feature that is not brought out explicitly by him, but is nevertheless presupposed: that possession of the *pneuma* implies that its possessors *understand* the whole account of the solution that Paul provides. For as we know, the *pneuma* is both a material *and* a cognitive phenomenon. That is, *since* they have received the *pneuma*, they will also understand Paul's account, not just of the problem, but also of the solution. (iv) Finally, there is one more way of seeing the relation between problem and solution, namely as focusing on 'ethics' and describing a step from a situation in which weakness of will persistently remains a terrible possibility into one in which the possibility of sinning is no longer there. *If* God's *pneuma* and Christ live in the Romans in such a way that the sarkic body, which was responsible for the problem, is dead, then the problem of weakness of will has been solved. And as Paul very clearly implies, believers will now fulfil the law.

The claim here is that these are different ways of reading the text, *all* of which are to the point. I personally think that the concrete, cosmological and somatological reading and also the cognitive one are very important since they capture something that *is* being said and also give precise, concrete and tangible meaning to the more mythological one. But we should not create a

53 This idea, on which Horn rightly places much emphasis, is found in 2 Cor 1.22, 5.5 and Rom 8.23.

dichotomy here. And we should not let ourselves be forced to settle for one reading only.⁵⁴

Then 8.12–13. I am convinced—fortunately with some others—that these verses constitute the paraenetic conclusion, not only to 8.1–11 and 7.7–8.11, but to the whole passage that begins at 6.1.⁵⁵ That cannot be argued here. Nor can we discuss the supposed problem it raises for a satisfactory understanding of Pauline paraenesis.⁵⁶ Let us just note that in 8.12–13, Paul does not restrict himself to pointing out the obvious: that ‘we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh [—but to the *pneuma*, to live in accordance with that]’ (8.12). Instead, he brings in once more (8.13) the fundamental contrast between *sarx* and death and the *pneuma* and life: If you live (in the present) in accordance with *sarx* (which you, of course, do *not*), then you will die (in the future). If, however, by means of the *pneuma* (that you do have) you *kill* the acts of the (physical, sarkic) body (as you do since that body is *dead*), then you will *live* (in the future). In 8.13 (as against 8.12) Paul is not providing paraenesis, but rather summing up the cosmological and theological facts about the connection between *sarx* and death and *pneuma* and life that *grounds* his paraenesis. Death and life are his ultimate trump cards. By summarizing the contrast between *sarx* and death and *pneuma* and life that he has developed in 8.5–11, a contrast that climaxed in 8.10, Paul puts all the power of his account of what *has* happened concretely to the Romans behind his paraenesis that they should now also show this in practice.⁵⁷

54 What has triggered this whole essay is a difficulty I had in *Paul and the Stoics* (esp. 246–53) of accounting well enough for the precise relationship between the ‘apocalyptic’ vocabulary of 8.1–13 and the philosophical and cognitive terminology in which Paul has in 7.7–25 stated the problem to which 8.1–13 provides the solution. The precise understanding offered here of Paul’s concept of *pneuma* removes the difficulty.

55 I have argued for this claim in some detail in *Paul and the Stoics*, 187 and 223–25, with references to Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* ad loc., Rudolf Schnackenburg, ‘Römer 7 im Zusammenhang des Römerbriefes’, *Jesus und Paulus* (ed. E. E. Ellis and E. Grässer; FS W. G. Kümmel; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975) 283–300; P. von der Osten-Sacken, *Römer 8 als Beispiel paulinischer Soteriologie* (FRLANT 112; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975); N. Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul’s Dialogue with Judaism* (JSNTSup 45; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990); and Fitzmyer, *Romans* ad loc. To these may now be added Byrne, *Romans* ad loc., and D.J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1996) 472.

56 I am referring to the problem of the whole point of exhortation if the addressees are supposed to be doing the proper thing anyhow. The solution lies in understanding paraenesis as a reminder, a feature that has been very importantly brought to the fore in the work of Abraham Malherbe (e.g. ‘Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament’, *ANRW* II.26.1 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992] 268–333). (As an example, think of a former smoker who *has* given up smoking, but may still need to be reminded of its dangers.)

57 This is perhaps the best place to add a few words on the *pneuma* in Paul as a messenger between God and human beings, inasmuch as this figure is most explicitly addressed in the

Consequences

It is time to draw out some of the consequences of this analysis.⁵⁸ I have been arguing against coming to the discussion of Paul with a set of dichotomies. In principle, I should think, there will not be much disagreement on this point. The problem is, however, that all those dichotomies—Judaism/Hellenism, Palestinian Judaism/Hellenistic Judaism, religion/philosophy, have-nots/elite, practices/ideas, Christianity/everything else—are firmly settled at the back of our minds and it is very, very difficult to extricate oneself from their grip.

But try we must. In this essay my main target has been the dichotomy between ‘apocalypticism’ and philosophy.⁵⁹ I have agreed, and I think it cannot be sufficiently emphasized, that Paul’s thought was ‘apocalyptic’ from one end to the other.⁶⁰ But his ‘apocalypticism’ was filled in with philosophical cosmology in a

immediately following text of Romans: 8.14–30. Here Paul twice (8.16 and 26) speaks of ‘the *pneuma* itself’ as distinct from ‘our *pneuma*’ (8.16). How did he think of the *pneuma* in this form? In its function, at least, it appears to operate exactly like Christ himself: both are said to ‘petition’ God (ἐντυγχάνειν) on behalf of the Christians (8.26–27 for the *pneuma*, 8.34 for Christ). Perhaps Paul just saw both figures as literally (and physically) operating in the kosmos *between* human beings at one end, whom they would enter and thus *become* ‘our *pneuma*’, and God at the other end, with whom they would have a relationship that remains a mystery. (There is no indication in Paul of any ‘cosmological’ understanding of God himself. I suppose Paul’s God was, as it were, nothing *other* than—the Jewish God.)

58 There are a number of consequences that I have no space to mention. The most important is that the basic, underlying problem that Paul addresses in Romans 1–8 is not a faulty relationship with God, but sinful behaviour connected with the physical body of flesh and blood. Paul’s strategy in these chapters is then to construct a *theory that explains* this problem in terms of a faulty relationship with God. This leads directly to his postulation of the Christ event as constituting the solution to the problem since the proper relationship with God, which is πίστις in relation to the Christ event, will *remove* the concern for the individual body that constitutes the problem. For this focus on ‘self-mastery’ as the underlying problem, compare Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven/London: Yale University, 1994) and ‘Paul and Self-Mastery’, *Paul in the Greco-Roman World* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003) 524–50.

59 This essay is my attempt finally to solve the problem raised for me by J. Louis Martyn in his careful and extensive review of *Paul and the Stoics*: that I unduly neglected the ‘apocalyptic’ dimension of Paul’s thought. (See Martyn, ‘De-apocalypticizing Paul: An Essay Focused on *Paul and the Stoics* by Troels Engberg-Pedersen’, *JSNT* 86 [2002] 61–102.) My own reply to Martyn still stands (‘Response to Martyn’, *JSNT* 86 [2002] 103–14) since I remain convinced that Martyn settles for emphasizing Paul’s ‘apocalypticism’ too quickly, that is, before he has tried to spell out what it means. (This is what I call the Käsemann gesture, about which I am quite sceptical.) In the present essay I have attempted to give precise content to Paul’s ‘apocalypticism’.

60 In the words of Martinus de Boer, Paul’s apocalyptic eschatology must not be ‘reduced to his understanding of the *parousia* and the end but also encompasses his understanding of Christ’s advent, death, and resurrection’ (‘Paul and Apocalyptic Eschatology’, 379 n. 24). Personally,

manner that had extensive and precise consequences for his conception of the human being in the world, down to his ‘anthropology’, his ‘somatology’ and his ‘ethics’. It all hangs firmly together.

I conclude with a hermeneutical reflection. Elsewhere, I have asked to what extent Paul’s thought constitutes what I called a ‘real option for us’.⁶¹ In this essay I have tried to develop certain cosmological elements in Paul that definitely do not constitute such an option. The cosmology, say, of Stoicism just cannot be ours.⁶² Faced with such a situation, one might decide to forget about cosmology and focus instead on something apparently more attractive: Paul’s critique of human bodily, social and political life in the present, earthly world. However, the net result of my analysis is that this side of his thought is, in fact, completely mixed up with his cosmology. So, there is not much to be gained from making such a move.

However, I am convinced that there is something wrong (though not *everything* wrong) with looking for a ‘real option for us’ in Paul. If we cannot immediately adopt Paul’s cosmology, neither can (or should) we adopt his views on the body, on social life and even on politics *just as they were*. But this should not in the least prevent us from *learning* from studying him.⁶³ What I myself find particularly fascinating about Paul is his radicality. When he speaks of a ‘new creation (κοινὴ κτίσις)’, he means it, and he means it quite concretely. True enough, it is not yet *quite* there. But it *is* there already, and to such an extent that what is still lacking is of no real concern to him.⁶⁴ However, this ‘enthusiasm’ did not prevent him from looking closely at the real world, too. Paul was also a realist. And so, being suspended between his conviction that an altogether different world had already been established and his realization of what the world actually looked like both

I would say that it contains much more, in particular, reception of the *pneuma* in believers, revelation through the *pneuma* of what God has given—plus the whole set of ideas that we have been discussing of the transformation of the body by the *pneuma* both now and in the future.

61 See *Paul and the Stoics*, 16–30.

62 It should be noted, however, that the modern physicist Shmuel Sambursky argued strongly that Stoic physics ‘anticipated basic ideas which have governed physical thought since the seventeenth century’ (*Physics of the Stoics* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959] vii). The strength of Stoic physics (including the theory of seeing the world as a continuum) may also explain why it was felt to be so attractive by a would-be Platonist like Philo.

63 The hermeneutical tool we need to make sense of our both using Paul for contemporary purposes and also not using him directly is that of *analogy*. We can find analogies in our own world to what Paul was saying within the confines of his own time and place. (We should also, however, be prepared to *reject* parts of Paul’s views even where they only have their counterparts in analogical form.)

64 τὰ ἀρχαία παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ (2 Cor 5.17).

inside and outside his communities, he spent an enormous effort on *spelling out* to his addressees, and even in philosophical terms, what it was that *had* taken hold of them: a genuinely new creation. When he fulfils this task, the audacity and radicality of his thinking are truly breathtaking.⁶⁵

65 After I had delivered the lecture at the SNTS meeting in Lund on which this essay is based, I came across what appears to be proof that the great Origen actually read Paul on *pneuma* in the way for which I have argued. In his treatise on the resurrection, the bishop Methodius said the following about and against Origen: Πᾶν γὰρ τὸ ἐκ καθαροῦ ἀέρος καὶ καθαροῦ πυρὸς συνιστάμενον σύγκριμα, καὶ τοῖς ἀγγελικοῖς ὁμοούσιον ὑπάρχον, οὐ δύναται γῆς ἔχειν ποιότητα καὶ ὕδατος, ἐπεὶ συμβήσεται ἔσεσθαι αὐτὸ γεῶδες. τοιοῦτον [i.e. τοῖς ἀγγελικοῖς ὁμοούσιον] καὶ ἐκ τούτων [i.e. ἐκ καθαροῦ ἀέρος καὶ καθαροῦ πυρὸς συνιστάμενον] τὸ ἀναστῆναι μέλλον σῶμα ἀνθρώπου ὁ Ὁριγένης ἐφαντάζετο, ὃ καὶ πνευματικὸν ἔφησεν. (Methodius, *On the Resurrection* 2.30.8 [GCS 27; ed. G. N. Bonwetsch; Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche, 1917] 388.) If Origen could φαντάζεσθαι this, so should we.